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FLOOR DEBATE

March 22, 2004      LB 1093

number one, against the amendment that Senator Wehrbein has introduced, and against the committee amendments. And then, while I'm at it, I might as well have a perfect score and be against LB 1093. I have, instead, a proposal for you to consider. We leave everything just exactly the way it is and the 5 percent will die, and then if a school district needs more money after the certification on February the 1st, or whatever that date will be, at your pleasure, they can go to the voters who carry the burden and ask them to value their educational system, because that's what this comes down to. I also wanted to point out a couple of things to you. Every one of us gets a deal from the Department of Labor about who is working and where they're working in the state of Nebraska, and I would point out to you that in January 2003 the total number employed in the state of Nebraska was 943,693 people. The percent of those people employed that are working for some form of government was 17 percent, 16.9, but I get to round up. In January of this year, one year later, that percentage is 17.9. In other words, there's 159,403 people working for the government. That does not count people employed in education. I don't know what that number is. I do know this, however; that any business, I don't care what kind of a business that is, could be a farm, could be a hospital, could be manufacturing, when circumstances dictate that you have to spend less because you have less income and it's nice to stay in the black, you make those necessary adjustments throughout. You start at some level of employment. You may reduce that. You may go to the people and say, I don't want to terminate anyone, I don't want to lay anybody off, but here's what we have to do. And you may diminish wages, and that's been done. Only in government...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR TYSON: ...and education that is not what happens. By leaving this thing the way it is, you will force adjustments. Now, that's already happened in my district, in two towns especially, Newman Grove and Tilden, Elkhorn Valley combined, where they have made drastic cuts because of diminishment. We will eventually get to the point where we will do something about the state of education in Nebraska and maybe we'll even get to the point where teachers will be allowed to teach and